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ABSTRACT

Written to be acted by individuals with disabilities, the theme of this play is the world of work and unemployment. The play is intended to bring more public attention to the human problems caused by unemployment and underemployment as well as to provide the unemployed with guidance. Major characters include a developmentally disabled young man, a bankrupt businessman, and various unemployed individuals including a university professor, grocery store worker, and a wood worker. (DB)

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ED274126

By MARTIN KIMELDORF

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HELP WANTED
SCENARIO

SETTING: A small lumber town in the Pacific Northwest during one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression....1982-1983 and beyond.

ACT I: SCENES-

SCENE 1: WITH THESE HANDS..... Frank's Workshop-October 1982

SCENE 2: PINK SLIPPAGE..... Lunchroom in a mill- November

SCENE 3: WOODHEADS AND KNOTHEADS..... Frank's Woodshop-March

SCENE 4: MUTLI-LEVEL REDEMPTION/
MARKETING YOUR FUTURE..... A Spanway Demo (to audience)-April

ACT II: SCENES-

SCENE 1: CONFLICT OF INTERESTS..... Bolles' Home-May

SCENE 2: HEADHUNTERS AND BODY SNATCHERS..... Office of Mr. Matson-June

SCENE 3: PASTEL BLUE COLLAR..... Bolles' home-June

SCENE 4: SHOOT THE MOON..... Bolles' home-June

SCENE 5: STICKS AND STONES/
BREAKING BONES..... Frank's Woodshop-June

CHARACTERS

Leads

Frank Bolles, Mike Bolles, Janey Bolles..... Father, Mother, Son

Supporting Parts

Andy (nickname "whimpy"), Dolores,
James (nickname "commissar")..... Frank's mill friends

Minor Parts....could be triple cast

Jack Aldahl..... Narrator

Dr. Goodman, Mr or Ms. Matson

INTRODUCTION:

Writing About Work....Can Work

The way we use our time has often become our name. Our identity has been wrapped up with our role as workers or producers. In the 20th century the way we do work, where we do work, how we distribute work has undergone major change. And yet, very few plays have been written about work. Only in the 1930's were we producing a true "work play genere."

Why would such an important, long term and everyday reality be so readily igonred. Many causes and groups have come to our attention in theatre. Theatre has responded by committing entire seasons to the subject...but very rarely has the subject of work become a Broadway season fashion...

We know that for each 1% rise in unemployment, there is a corresponding 1% rise in death due to stress related diseases. As people lose places in the work sites they find new places in the prisons and homes for battered spouses or children. The work that is left after automating the worksite is often meaningless and certainly very insecure. Upwards of 65% of the population cannot find a job that matches their ability, education and interests.

We need to go beyond the statistics. We need contributions from artists who can help illuminate this broad ranging topic. Our source of identity is rapidly shifting. This effects our work place and our body politic. We need new voices on this topic....otherwise our art will follow and not lead in this era being born.

I began writing this section to apologize for referring to the copyright date on this play. The original copyright was 1983. It was written during one of the worst recessions since the 1930's. In fad-focussed world of drama, referring to the "past" (1982-83) is not the way to garner immediate interest in one's work. But after examining this thoroughly, I realized that I was part of a rich past and growing future examination of work in the 19th, 20th and soon 21st century. I am not apologizing at this point, but encouraging others to also contribute.

5'th Edition Acknowledgements:

I am grateful to all the people who helped to bring this play to life. It has won 3 awards during the first 4 editions. Each production has helped me to improve this script. I wish to specifically thank Tony Tacconi who directed the 2nd Edition in the 3rd Annual Northwest Playwright's Conference held in Seattle and sponsored by the Empty Space Theatre. Likewise, Pauline Peotter who made invaluable contributions to the 1st Edition and then later during production of the 4th Edition. This play is truly the product of many hands.

Martin Kimeldorf, 1985
Tumwater, WA

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The Origins Of Help Wanted

"Marty, everyone was desperate in the 30's. I travelled around lookin' everywhere for work. I slept in flop houses and travelled light...We were still promoting our opera when we could.....

I always carried my alarm clock. Symbolically it meant that I might find work. One night I met this guy and we decided to share the rent while we both pounded the pavement....Seemed like a good idea. But when I woke up the next day my "new buddy" was gone, and so was my alarm clock...

For awhile I thought I'd never find work"

These were the kind of stories my uncle "A.T." [Alex Tamkin] regaled me with when I once went looking for work in New York during a previous recession in the early 1970's. Later, in the recession of the early 80's I substituted a phone answering machine for my Uncle's alarm clock...

1983 witnessed an "old fashioned" misery that had not been experienced since since the 1930's. The evening news camera panned across a Detroit breadline wrapping around a city block...a Food Bank goes bust in Seattle...A family is living out of their car in Texas, while looking for work. The cameras showed the stunned faces of state workers who realized that even government jobs were no longer secure. A special was done as recently as 1985 in the darkened saw mills that will never see the saws switched on again.

The chaos of the marketplace periodically takes one of it's most painful forms as the specter of unemployment. Statistics on death, abuse, crime increase with unemployment. The caldron of despair boils over and tears apart families. Bureaucrats and politicians seems powerless...they talk in jargon-terms about a "decaying infra-structure".

In this play I tried to use the real work terms of the unemployed. This play is dedicated to everyone suffering through their personal hard times. *HELP WANTED* is an attempt to show that the story of the unemployed is worthy of staging. During most of the 82-83 recession we still had no major motion picture or television "special" on this pervasive topic.... *WHY?*

Therefore, in keeping with the spirit of the play the following condition must be met for production. At least one production will be done in a location that makes the play accessible to the unemployed. This means the admission for this performance should be based on proof of unemployment (unpaid utility bill, unemployment benefit stubb, etc). Likewise, employed people should be required to bring a can of food for the local food bank.

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A major character is Mike Bolles. He portrays someone with a moderate to severe disability. In this script he is developmentally delayed, but the disability can vary. In the spirit of the play, the producer/director should try to cast this part with a person who not only has acting ability, but first hand knowledge of disabilities as well. My previous text *OPEN AUDITIONS* [1] has several suggestions for recruiting and directing people with special needs. You will note that Mike's part has short lines, are often preceded by visual or verbal cues and he is able to get off stage frequently. This was purposefully done to make the part more accessible for someone with special learning needs.

Finally, this play is dedicated to the person who inspried me to take up writing plays. His life was inspirational for me. He was helpful and patient in my first stumbling efforts at playwriting. A.T. was both critical and kind. My uncle was once escorted "by New York's Finest" **out** to the City's limits for trying to establish one of the first hospital worker's unions in the 30's. Later he was escorted to an opera house for the premier his work *The Dybbuk*. He is a fine example of the character "Essau" in his later work *The Blue Plum Tree*. Essau is described as the "warming kind".

- Martin Kimeldorf, 1983

[1] Open Auditions available from Ednick Communications, PO Box 3612, Portland, Oregon. 97208.

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SCENE 1: WITH THESE HANDS

STAGE SETTING:

THE STAGE HAS 3 MAIN AREAS. THE MOST PROMINENT IS FRANK'S WORKSHOP. THE FOCUS OF THIS WORKSHOP IS "GRAMPS" TABLE SAW. THE WALLS HAVE PICTURES OF OTHER TOOLS DRAWN ON THEM. AS THE PLAY PROGRESSES THESE PICTURES DISAPPEAR. THERE IS A BLACKBOARD IN THE SHOP WHICH FRANK USES IN TEACHING MIKE.

ANOTHER AREA DOWN STAGE IS AN OFFICE AREA USED BY THE NARRATOR. THIS AREA IS ALSO USED BY DR. GOODMAN AND MR. MATSON. IT HAS A DESK, COMPUTER AND PHONE. THE PHONE CAN BE SHARED WITH THE BOLLE'S HOUSEHOLD SET.

THE THIRD AREA IS THE BOLLES FAMILY ROOM/KITCHEN AREA. A POKER TABLE OCCUPIES IT'S CENTER. OFF TO ONE SIDE IS A KITCHEN OR FOOD PREPARATION AREA. FRANK'S EASY CHAIR MAY BE LOCATED HEREIN. NEAR THE EASY CHAIR IS A SMALL TABLE. A PHONE CAN BE PLACED HERE.

SCENE TITLES ARE PROJECTED UPON A SCREEN. UPON THE WALLS AND/OR SCREEN ARE PROJECTED WANT ADS AND HEADLINES RELEVANT TO THE PLAY.

THE NARRATOR IS JACK ALDAHL. HE ALSO CAN PLAY DR. GOODMAN AND MR. MATSON ALONG WITH OTHERS. THE PARTS NEED NOT BE ALL MALE OR FEMALE.

JACK ALDAHL IS NICKNAMED JACK "ALL BALLS". HE IS A TOUGH, WIREY INDIVIDUAL. DRESSED IN "FASHIONABLE BUSINESS ATTIRE". HE IS COCKY AND OVER CONFIDENT. HIS CHARACTER SUGGESTS A CERTAIN AMBIGUITY, LEAVING HIM WITH BOTH LIKABLE AND UNLIKEABLE TRAITS.

JACK IS WORKING AT HIS DESK, DICTATING, PHONING, WRITING, LOOKING UP CALENDARS AS PLAY OPENS. HE LEANS BACK AS HE FINISHES HIS LAST CALL TO THE BANK:

JACK:

OKAY...Okay! I agree, Hot-Tubs-On-Wheels was not the best idea...but U-Haul-Your-Home is real hot...the market is national in scope!
...I know everyone wants a hand out.... Look, if I had that much collatoral I wouldn't be asking for this loan....I know you're not a god damn charity ....Yes I've seen the Help Wanted....Why do you think I'm calling you...All right.....all right....24 hours....Good-bye.

[HANGS UP....LEANS FOREWARD TO TALK TO AUDIENCE IN EARNEST]

JACK:

Banks love to make you wait.
My names Jack Aldahl...I'm your narrator tonight...God, I haven't been to a play since I was in college...

I guess I'd do the same if I was the bank manager. Too many bad loans in these times and you have a run on the bank....Hell, what are my business credentials?

I got a liberal arts degree, knapsack and blue workshirt from the 60's. In the 70's I traded in my jeans for a jogging suit and bought a personal computer.

I told Uncle Norman I wasn't cut out for business. I told him I liked to work with people. You know what Uncle Normie said? [mimicking Uncle Norman]

"Undertakers like to work with people my boy. You've got to have a more specific target. You like to wear 3 piece suits don't you? Then stop wasting your time in liberal arts."

Uncle Normie was a self-made cars salesman. Ended up owning his own lot. He let me work summers. Later, when I went into an MBA program he made me weekend manager. I went from polishing fenders to waxing the wallets of customers.

Then the old badger dropped dead on us at 52! I guess that's the price a work acholic pays. The old fart left me the entire business and some cash. No way could I finish my MBA and run that place...What an irony.

I had fire in the belly, started each work day by 5 AM in the morning....worked 60 and 80 hour weeks and didn't even notice...The Chamber changed my name from Jack Aldahl to Jack All-Balls....It was a tremendous!

That was the honeymoon. In 1982 the whole economy went on the skids. Hell, I couldn't give cars away.

By the summer I declared bankruptcy...It was worse than being fired.....I felt like shit! I was angry....I hated everyone: the customers who didn't pay....the banker who would not extend my loan... I wanted to kill....I even thought of killing myself.

Instead I took another class.I went to this seminar for bankrupt people. Heard a great speaker. He told us "Don't get mad, get even!" Helped me realize that behind every bankruptcy there's a bankroll.....

...Sitting there in my bankrupt parking lot...looking at the trailers that were still left..... It came to me all at once!
...Sure everyone was unemployed...that was the dark cloud. But everyone finally has to look for work. Everyone has to travel. Everyone has to pack it up and ship out.....

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JACK:

I stopped blaming myself. My inheritance from Uncle Normie finally came through and I and started PEOPLE'S U-HAULS.

[Phone rings]

That might be the bank....

Let's begin with Act I, Scene I: WITH THESE HANDS.

[The scene title appears or is displayed by JACK]

SETTING:
IT IS THE BEGINNING OF A RECESSION IN 1982 OR OTHER SIMILAR TIME.

THIS PART BEGINS IN FRANK'S WOODWORKING PLACE WHICH IS A CONVERTED GARAGE. THERE ARE VARIOUS WOODWORKING MACHINES, TOOLS, BENCHES AND PROJECTS. THE MACHINE OCCUPYING CENTER PLACE IS AN OLD TABLE SAW.

FRANK IS A ROBUST PERSON, WITH A TWINKLE IN HIS EYE. WHILE QUICK WITH HIS EMOTIONS, HE IS GENERALLY EVEN TEMPERED, TAKING A GENEROUS AND HUMOROUS VIEW OF THE WORLD. HE CAN LAUGH AT HIMSELF AND HIS SITUATION ....UP TO A POINT. HE IS MORE SATIRICAL THAN CYNICAL.

FRANK IS COLORFUL AND OFTEN GESTURES WITH HIS HANDS. HE OFTEN EXAGGERATES WITH SOUND OR GESTURE CERTAIN WORDS OR PHRASES IN HIS SPEECH TO UNDERSCORE HIS INTENDED MEANING.

FRANK HAS A VISION OF WHAT HE COULD BE, BUT THIS IS SOMEWHAT OBSCURED BY THE 15 FRUSTRATING YEARS HE HAS SPENT IN A WOODMILL. FRANK IS IN HIS LATE 30'S, BUT HE COULD LOOK OLDER.

MIKE IS A YOUNG MAN 17-21 WHO IS DEVELOPMENTALLY DELAYED. WHILE HE WALKS AND PERHAPS TALKS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY, HIS ENTHUSIASM IS INFECTIOUS AND SOON ONE FORGETS THE SUPERFICIAL OUTWARD MANEFESTATIONS OF HIS HANDICAP. HE IS CONFIDENT IN THE WOOD SHOP.

FRANK AND MIKE ARE SETTING UP A PIECE OF WOOD FOR ROUTING AS THE LIGHTS COME UP. AS THE LIGHTS REACH FULL IMPACT THE ROUTER IS TURNED ON. THIS SHOULD BE A REAL ROUTER AND THE PIERCING SOUND IS THE FIRST THING HEARD.

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FRANK IS GUIDING MIKE IN THE ROUTING WORK, USING HAND-OVER-HAND PLACEMENT. FINALLY THE ROUTING STOPS AND MIKE IS EXCITED.

THROUGHOUT THIS SCENE FRANK AND MIKE HURRY, TRYING TO FINISH BEFORE JANEY RETURNS.

IT IS THE FALL OF 1982 OR OTHER SIMILAR ECONOMIC HARD TIMES....

MIKE:

I didn't chip the letters! ....No mistakes

FRANK:
[Pointing to the small pile of previous signs]

How many mistakes?

MIKE:

We need kindling.

FRANK: [laughing]

What a Woodhead.

MIKE: [holding up the sign]

Okay Mr. Knothead.....

[trying to read the sign...slowly says:]

"F and M Wood....Wood—"

[FRANK makes the "k" sound to help MIKE realize that is is a 'hard "C" sound' after the word "Wood"]

"Wood...Craft"

FRANK:

We need a stain.

MIKE:

Which one?

FRANK:

What did we use on the Butler table?

MIKE:

Honey?

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FRANK:

Hop to...Your mother is due any minute!

[MIKE exits and FRANK picks up a chisel... FRANK mimicks Mike as he repairs the sign]

"No mistakes...."
As long as I chip off the bottom of the "E"....There "FRANK and MIKE Woodcrafts"

[MIKE returns as FRANK strops chisel]

MIKE: [holding a can of paint]

Is this it?

FRANK:

That's not Honey....It says, "House Paint".....What's the rule?

MIKE:

Woodworkers stain.....Carpenters paint.

FRANK:

We aren't spoiling our new sign with paint are we?

MIKE:

Stain.....

FRANK:

[Writing and Spelling out the word on the blackboard]

S-t-a-i-n.

MIKE:

Stain.

FRANK:

Get a leg up...We want to surprise her when she gets home...

MIKE:

Can I show her the trophy first?

FRANK:

We'll see.....now get the stain.

MIKE EXITS AND FRANK BEGINS SOME CLEAN UP. THEN FRANK LAYS OUT NEWSPAPER FOR STAINING THE SIGN. HE IS OBVIOUSLY PROUD OF THE SIGN'S MEANING FOR HIM....HE STARES AND TENDERLY TOUCHES THE SIGN....THEN THE SOUND OF A CAR PULLING UP IS HEARD....THIS BREAK'S FRANK'S CONCENTRATION....JANEY HAS ARRIVED...AND WE HEAR HER CALLING OFF STAGE.

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JANEY:
I could use a little help with the groceries!
[FRANK quickly finds a can of wood oil]

FRANK:
She's always on time!
I can finish this with Tung oil.....
[begins to quickly rub some on the sign]

It's going to be indoors anyway....I'll steel wool it later

[JANEY ENTERS ...SHE IS ABOUT 35, SIMPLY DRESSED, PRACTICAL IN NATURE. SHE IS A WARM PERSON WHO OFTEN COMMUNICATES WITH TOUCH AS WELL AS WORDS.

SHE IS TIRED. SHE IS CARRYING AN ENVELOPE. WHILE SHE IS TIRED, SHE IS ALSO EXCITED ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THE ENVELOPE. SLOWLY HER EXCITEMENT DRAINS; AND THE STRESS OF THE DAY AND MIKE'S PROBLEMS OVERTAKES HER.]

JANEY:
I thought I'd find you in the sawdust pile.

FRANK:
I'll be there in a second hon....

JANEY:
The Rocky Road will turn to chocolate soup during one of Frank Bolle's famous seconds.

[MIKE ENTERS WITH A CAN....STARTLED BY SEEING HIS MOTHER HE BLURTS OUT...]

MIKE:
MOM!!
Don't look at the sign!

FRANK:
It's okay Mike...I just finished putting Tung Oil on it.

MIKE: [sullenly, half to himself]
I was too slow...

FRANK:
Don't talk like that!

JANEY:
It's that stupid woodshop teacher. Mr Harrison sent out warning slips today...

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MIKE:
I didn't get the salad bowl done in time.

FRANK:
Did you show him the table we finished.....[MIKE indicates "no"]

JANEY:
Don't worry...Next quarter you'll be spending half a day at Millside.

FRANK:
Don't pay any attention to Harrison...I didn't like him any better when I was in school. Gramps was the one I learned from....And his saw is the one we do best with, right partner?
Let Mike finish his last semester in school...After he graduates he can punch in at--

[lifting the sign in triumph]

F and M WOODCRAFTS!

[MIKE races out as if on cue]

JANEY:
Frank you forgot the second M.....

FRANK: [looking at the sign, puzzled]

Where?

JANEY:
It's up on a hill....Millside Community Center.

FRANK:
What's he gonna learn in a sheltered workshop. They turn out the same piece of junk all the time....Didn't I teach him to make a dovetail joint when Harrison thought he was too dumb to use a miter box?

JANEY:
You said it was going to be a weekend business....What will Mike do on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday--

FRANK:
Maybe we should be in operation Monday, Tuesday--

[MIKE races in with a trophy]

MIKE:
Dad won 1st place!

FRANK:
300 dollars prize money!

JANEY:
Buy another machine, no doubt.

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MIKE:
I picked up some business license forms.

MIKE: [picking up sign proudly]
F and M Wood---Woodcrafts.....F and M.....FRANK and MIKE!
I did it with the router.

JANEY: [she slumps onto a stool]
I see.

MIKE:
Can I take the trophy to school.....?

FRANK:
Haven't you taken enough ribbons and trophies this year?

MIKE:
I'll pack it in egg cartons...in my tool box.....[FRANK nods]

JANEY:
Well, I need some help with my egg cartons....

MIKE:
Did you get any Twinkies.....?

[FRANK and MIKE begin to exit. JANEY grabs FRANK'S arm]

JANEY:
Yes.....yes.....now take in the Rocky Road before it melts! Your father will join you in a minute.....I have to talk to him.

MIKE:
Rocky Road, here I come.....

[MIKE EXITS.....
FRANK THEN TURNS AND HUGS JANEY TENDERLY]

JANEY:
I needed that.....

FRANK:
Long lines again?

JANEY:
Ernie's wife came in today.

FRANK:
Thelma was at the Food Bank?!

[she nods]

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JANEY

She said it was for her neighbor.

FRANK:

Her neighbor?

JANEY:

A lot of people do that when they first come in....Right behind her was a man in a suit, saying it was for his mother....And in the next setnence his whiskey breath was all over me.

FRANK:

That's a hell of a line to stand in.....

[she pulls away]

I didn't mean that....Last month Ernie dropped out of poker....

JANEY:

Thelma says he won't go out...He tells her that nobody even takes applications anymore. and look....Thelma said he just locks himself in his garage and works on the car... but she thinks he's drinking....

FRANK:

Everytime we break for the Gin Mill... Ernie's all ready 3 drinks ahead.

JANEY:

It's worse than drinking....Thelma had a black eye.

FRANK:

Ernie's not like that!

JANEY:

She said it was a fall....

FRANK:

Maybe it was. I saw him yesterday at People's U-HAUL .....he was talking about heading for Texas....

[JANEY shakes her head]

JANEY:

They have food banks down there too.....

[FRANK pauses and then suddently blurts out the following, unable to keep it in much longer. It has been bothering him from some time]

FRANK:

It's getting worse right here....Whimpy got his pink slip today....

JANEY:

Hasn't he been there 6 years?.....Who's next?

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[SILENCE...they stare at each other, then break away as if avoiding the answer]

FRANK:

He just stood there frozen with his pink slip.....At least his uncle runs a warehouse.....The union figures there will be more cuts next month.

JANEY:

Yesterday's cold cuts arrived opened and spoiled. People can't even wait for it to reach the Food Bank.....I can't keep up Frank. I'm going to have to spend more time with the grocers. The shelves are only half full on Friday's.....

FRANK:

Janey you can't do all the volunteering yourself. You come home tired and...and—

JANEY: [hugging Frank]

Bitchy.....

FRANK:

Nah—

[EMBRACES AND KISSES HER STRONGLY]

Hey I did bring home some good news....

[fumbles in pocket for a card]

I met this swell guy at the last wood crafts exhibition.

JANEY: [reading card]

"Woodworkers Galleria....Gill Scot Jones, Proprietor"

FRANK:

Said he'd take all the pieces Mike and I could turn out before Christmas. He only pays top dollar.

[JANEY moves away]

It's not just another blue ribbon or trophy! This is a gallery hon!

JANEY:

A "galleria"!

FRANK:

That's right...It's for artists...

JANEY:

Artists stand in our food line too.

FRANK:

Look, I figure we can start small...You know weekends and evenings. Then as we build word of mouth maybe it can be full time.

[JANEY moves over and picks up sign]

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JANEY:

"F and M Woodcrafts"?

FRANK:

I don't want to be just another greenchain lumber donkey...waiting for some million-to-one lottery ticket. These hands pulled in $600 dollars last year in prize money....

JANEY:

Mike got to use the router?

FRANK:

Didn't do half bad...

JANEY:

I thought he wasn't ready, last week.

FRANK:

That was only his second time.

JANEY:

Last week was before the Galleria...

FRANK:

Yeah.....[hugs her] You got my number don't you....
[kisses her]

JANEY:

Frank, I'm worried about the mill.....

FRANK:

Don't worry, I won't quit the mill until F and M can support us all...
Hell, I'll probably work at that mill long after gramp's saw falls apart on me.

JANEY:

We've got to think of Mike's future too. I got this today [hands him envelope].

FRANK: [Reading the paper slowly]

"LIVING WILL PILOT PROJECT".

JANEY:

It's a new project the State is trying out in our town.... If Mike puts money into this special account then he gets matching funds...It's like a pension. They also provide a guardian for the account. It will take care of Mike when we aren't around.

FRANK:

Damn, today I felt like a kid after visiting that Galleria...Now you got me in the ground, and my son's a pensioneer!

JANEY:

We were lucky to have this plan. For once Mike's disability may mean less worry.... instead of more. [Pause]
Mike won't be able to run the business when you're gone.

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FRANK:
Everybody's always saying what Mike can't do...

JANEY:
Frank, you know how long we've waited for that spot at Millside. But Millside is only a solution for today, when he leaves school... If we start saving now maybe he'll have enough when we aren't here to provide for him...He can still work weekends with you.

FRANK:
Okay, okay, I'll talk to him.....We'll just keep it a weekend business...But we got to get started or Mr. Gill Scott Jones will start looking elsewhere.

[they embrace as MIKE enters with 2 dishes of ice cream]

MIKE:
No horseplay at the saw.....

JANEY:
Ice cream before dinner?

MIKE:
Not just ice cream. This is a Rocky Road-Twinkie sunday. We got to celebrate!

JACK
[Scene shifts to JACK who is finishing on the phone with his banker...Then to audience]

I can't believe he turned me down... I must get a dozen calls a month from folks wanting to franchise PEOPLE'S U-HAULS.

I think I'll go to the board of directors...I'll go over his head.

[Posturing as if talking to Board of Directors]

Sure, I went bankrupt....Who hasn't.
Look failure is to capitalism what Hell is to Christianity. It purges us of simple minded ideas. It makes us mentally tough. Today, everyone of my units is rented!

I'm out on the floor with customers oO and 80 hours a week. I get around... U-Haul-Your-Home national franchise is going to make it big.

I don't need to do some kind of case study.
I know what's on people's minds...they're going bankrupt in their own homes. They want to get out like I did.

Here let me just read you a few headlines.....
"Timber orders from Japan fall off dramatically.....Inventory builds as Boeing orders fall off....."

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[ADD LOCAL NEWSPAPER STATS HERE. EG: "LABOR DEPARTMENT NOTES UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS NOT CHANGED"...."AFL-CIO ISSUES STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LACK OF GROWTH IN FACE OF ADMINISTRATIONS OPTOMISTIC REPORTS]

JACK:

That's my target population...those are my future customers. And they're all going to need a place to live when they move....Who can affort rent when they are still looking for work? We convert the vans into mobile living units...

[back to the audience]

The only advantage we got over the apes is common sense...a horse is stronger and a dog is friendlier...

I'll put together a presentation that will knock their socks off...Charts, headlines, want ads, the works!

Let's get goin'!

Scene 2: PINK SLIPPAGE

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SCENE 2: PINK SLIPPAGE

SETTING: LIGHTS COME UP ON JACK THE NARRATOR READING HIS NEWSPAPER. AS HE SCANS THE HEADLINES, HE THEN READS THE HELP WANTED. EVENTUALLY, JACK READS THEM OUT LOUD AND PUNCTUATES THE SCENE WITH HELP WANTED ADS.

FRANK IS REVEALED LATER SITTING AT A TABLE WITH HIS LUNCH PAIL. WE ARE IN A LUNCHROOM IN THE MILL. HE IS HOLDING A PINK SLIP.

DOLORES IS ACROSS FROM FRANK. SHE MOVED FROM OFFICE WORK TO GREENCHAIN. SHE IS A PIONEER, NOT A CRUSADER. SHE HAD TO STRUGGLE TO BE THE FIRST WOMAN ON GREENCHAIN, BUT EVENTUALLY WON THE MEN'S RESPECT AND WAS ELECTED SHOP STEWARD FOR HER DEPARTMENT.

DOLORES:

Janey will understand.

FRANK:

My wife's already too understandin' ... Hasn't she put in over 2 years at the Food Bank?

DOLORES:

Nobody thought the pink slips would reach this far back.

FRANK:

Do you remember when Andy got his?.....After you guys left I stuck around for a few drinks. Then he started readin' the want ads out loud. And when he was done his eyes was filled like water pitchers....

DOLORES:

He finally got a job.

FRANK:

I don't have an uncle in the warehouse business...but I got a lot of friends in the credit bureau.

JACK:

"Durham plant closes, 260 laid off."
"New claims filed with State Employment triples."
"Everyone packing up heading south."

DOLORES:

If anybody find a job in hard times, Frank Bolles can!

FRANK:
I'll go to every cabinet shop, every lumber yard, every place you hear a saw. Things are bound to pick up. The Northwest is full of trees beggin' to be milled.

DOLORES:
I heard a lot of the plants are going to move South when it's all over. The wood grows faster and there's no union scale.

FRANK:
Don't try to cheer me up too much Dolores.

DOLORES:
Get into something new Frank...Don't wait around for these old mills...What about those orders you had from that art gallery?

FRANK:
It closed last month. This plant ain't the only place that's hurtin'. Hell, I'm out of business before I get into it.

JACK:
"President asks nation to Stay the Course"
"New jobs bill stalled in Committee"
"Budget Red Ink Forces Cut Backs in Social Services"
This could be bigger than I thought.

FRANK: [half to the audience]
For 15 years I got up at 5:30 so I could punch in at this nothin' job by 6:30. ...Now they take it away and I feel like less than nothin'.

DOLORES:[partly to herself]
Frank, I never would have made it out here on the shop floor if it weren't for you. Bein' first woman on Greenchain was tough. In the typin' pool I got sneers from my friends, and out on the floor they pinched my butt so many times I felt like filing for workmen's comp. You were the only one, Frank.

FRANK:
Damn it! Dolores! How come I'm so good at helping everybody except Frank Bolles?!

[pause]
It's like this nightmare I have where I lose all my teeth right after I brush them...I wake up in a sweat, licking my gums...

[long pause]

Who's gonna come and wake me up now, Dolores?

[pause]
I never had more than 3 or 4 jobs before I came to this mill. Am I supposed to go back out on the streets like some cocksure kid....I'm too old to start over as a dishwasher.

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JACK: [Addressing the audience]

I know the bankers have a pile of green....They're just afraid.....God knows why.
Like my Uncle Normie used to say, "Make money, screw everything else...This is a profit making business".

Look, in tough times it's farewell ideology. Philsophy is nice but it don't pay the rent.

Don't get me wrong....I got a personal philosophy.....it's called Survival. And if I make it then my payroll makes it. And that means jobs!

Hell I started this with money I earned in one of those Pyramid schemes. I sold Spanway. I still sell it out of my home.

Today I've got 9 PEOPLE'S U-HAUL franchises in this state alone....

I'm thinking of issuing some public stock. So you might want to consider my offer before you leave.

What are you laughing at bozo? I'm talking about a National Franchise...
Don't shake your head in simple ignorance....[picking up newspaper]
Have you seen today's headlines???

[JACK READING]

"Durham plant closes, 260 out on the pavement"
"At state employment, New Claims filed triples"
"New jobs bill stalled in committee.....Red ink forces cutbacks"

You want more? .....Help Wanted.....Look....here:

This used to be 3 columns long. Now we have 6 inches, less than half a column. And what do we got here:

[reading want ads]

"Earn while you learn..5 week training course in office skills. Must have High School Diploma or GED. Preference in re-training given to displaced workers"

How many mill workers are going to become typists?

[reading resumes]

"Have a good time and make friends. Novelty Greeting Company has immediate opening for Strip-A-Gram. Must have own car." What a joke!

....People are moving on, and that means PEOPLE'S U-HAUL.

Think on it. The sign up list will be in the lobby.

Scene 3: WOODHEADS AND KNOT HEADS

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SCENE 3: WOODHEADS AND KNOTHEADS

SETTING: FRANK AND MIKE ARE WORKING IN THE WOOD SHOP. FRANK IS PUSHING A PIECE OF WOOD THROUGH THE TABLE SAW. MIKE IS USING A BELT SANDER. AFTER THE WORK IS ESTABLISHED, MIKE COMES OVER TO HIS DAD AND SHOWS HIM THE PIECE. MIKE WAITS IN EAGER ANTICIPATION OF THE JUDGEMENT OF HIS FATHER.

MIKE:

Okay?

FRANK:

I see a craftsman's touch....You got the knack.

MIKE:

I got the knack!

FRANK:

Maybe you should knock off the edge here with a bevel.

MIKE:

Bevel.

FRANK:

Then go ahead and stain it with the mahogany.

MIKE:

You watch?

FRANK:

No....this time you're on your own Woodhead. You remember which one?

MIKE:

Mahogany.

FRANK:

And the steps?

MIKE:

Two on the flat grain, one on end grain.

FRANK:

Good!!

MIKE: [looks around shop for stain]

Okay, Knothead.

FRANK:

Be careful...or you'll end up a dead head.

[stops sawing, gropes through wood pile]

Pitch pockets...splits...
I wish we could afford select grades.

Maybe we could paint them....In these times we're all doing things we never thought we would.

[MIKE shows the 2 cans he has found]

MIKE:

Which one?

FRANK:

Try and read it.

MIKE:

M-m-m

FRANK:

Good, what's the next letter?

MIKE:

A.

MIKE & FRANK:

Ma--Ma--

MIKE:[pronounces like "map"]

Ma-p...Map--

FRANK:

Keep it a long "a" sound.

MIKE:

Map....Maple!

FRANK:

Then what's in the other?

MIKE:

Mahogany...

FRANK:

And which one is dark red?

MIKE:

Mahogany.

FRANK:
[opens can and sticks MIKE'S finger in it]

What color is that?

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MIKE:

Mahogany!

FRANK:
[touches finger to his own nose, making a red mark]

Now if you ever forget, just look at ol' Knothead's nose!

[MIKE laughs and touches his finger to his own nose]

MIKE:
Woodworkers stain....Carpenters paint.

FRANK:
You can remember like an elephant when you want to....Woodworkers paint when they can't afford decent wood.

MIKE:
Let's get some.

FRANK:
Have I been working this last 20 weeks?
[MIKE shakes his head]
Besides, I don't know if there'll be an extension of benefits...

MIKE:
I'm gonna earn paychecks.

FRANK:
I'm not using your checks.
[picks up piece of wood, looks at it and puts it in MIKE'S hands]
I'll cut my own trees if I have to.

MIKE:
Sell these at the Saturday Market?

FRANK:
It takes a year to get a stall....No, next Christmas we'll just make them for relatives and friends.

MIKE:
We work in the shop and make toys.

[goes over and picks up old F & M sign]

"F and M Woodcrafts."

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FRANK:

Don't be a Hose Head...put that down! You're gonna start Millside early. You don't even have to wait 'til June. Be grateful you got a job this Spring. Now, go get the Red Paint.

MIKE: [reading to self]

"FRANK and MIKE Woodcrafts"...

FRANK:

Knock it off and get the RED...R-E-D...

MIKE: [points to his own nose]

R-E-D...

FRANK:

[laughing at MIKE, throws rag at him]

R...E...D....now get!

[FRANK goes over and picks up sign]

F and M...Woodcrafts...

[goes and lifts lid of wood crate]

Didn't even get to unpack the planer...

[goes over to old table saw covered with a tarp, lifts it--then talking toward audience]

At least they can't take back Gramp's saw.

[pretends to push wood through the old saw, mimicking sounds and movement]

"E-e-e-e-oww-w-w"..."E-e-e-e-oww-w-w"
How many board feet have I fed you?
I used to think I could hear each saw tooth planing away those chips
...So velvet and smooth...
And nobody believed me. I told them...
I told them I could hear you thanking me...

[pretends as above but this time sound is mixture of machine and words:]

"Thann-n-nk You"...."Thann-n-nk You"....
Look at me, I'm still talking to you!
I must have "knothead"
carved across my forehead for life,
thanks to you.

[picks up F&M sign and stares at it]

F and M Woodcrafts...a two splinter operation.

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FRANK:

[puts down sign and hovers over saw]

"Feeeeeed Me".....Feeeeeed Me".....

[puts tarp back over saw]

I don't care what they say, I still can hear you croaking at me old buzz saw.

[MIKE returns with a can]

MIKE:

Red?

FRANK:

Red what?

MIKE: [pronounces hard "C" sound]

"C" ["K"].

FRANK:

No...that's the one that has an "S" sound... don't you remember nothin' your mother teaches you?

MIKE:

S---s---cedar.

FRANK:

Is Red Cedar a paint or stain?

MIKE:

Stain?

FRANK:

Now go get the red PAINT...[writing it out:] P-A-I-N-T.

MIKE:

Paint...[exits]

FRANK:

[pulls back tarp talking again to machine]

And that's my apprentice...A Woodhead...some great trick...I must have been dreamin'...

You ought to be glad I keep your face hid in this tarp...you don't have to see all his dumb mistakes.... Red Cedar!

[puts tarp back over machine]

Rest easy.

[thinks a bit then puts sign under tarp]

Don't tell Gramps.

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MIKE: [enters in tears]

I can't tell...I can't tell!

FRANK:

Tell what?

MIKE:

Which is Red PAINT.... They're gonna fire me at Millside.... I opened a can and it was brown.

FRANK:

You can find Red.

MIKE:

I'll get fired.... I can't do nothing.

FRANK:

You spell it for me right now...

MIKE:

R-E-----

FRANK:

R-E.

MIKE:

R-E---I don't want to go to Millside! ...I want to work here.

FRANK:

I told you, we ain't gonna have a shop. Look around you Mike. Do you see a lathe? That went back in January. Do you see our jig saw? Went in February.

MIKE:

We can get them back.

FRANK:

I'm not making that mistake twice.

MIKE:

Where's the sign?

FRANK:

Forget the damn sign!

MIKE: [Mike pounds on table]

No Millside!

FRANK:

Hold it right there Mike Bolles! What are you getting so worked up about? Don't be a Hozer, get your head out! What did you see when we went up there? What machines did you get to try out?

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MIKE:

Saws...drills....

FRANK:

And they're not even making you take the evaluation. How come?

MIKE:

I don't care.

FRANK:

Because you showed them how to cut a miter joint on the table saw.... Because you showed them how to joint an edge. You got nothin' to worry about.

MIKE:

Kids at school call me names.

FRANK:

And we just laugh right back, don't we.... We both got names...Mr. Knothead and Mr. Woodhead.... So what.

MIKE:

Someday we work here.... I'll buy back the planer.

FRANK:

The day I have to depend on your paycheck is the day you can build me a pine box.... Look, they'll probably get you a job at Coreman's Furniture.

MIKE:

F and M....

FRANK:

Phil owes me one for getting his son on at the mill last year. But first you got to prove yourself at Millside.

MIKE:

I'm scared.

FRANK:

You should be celebrating. How many of your buddies got a job? How many people are working today at all.... Look at your ol' man...on the dole from November to March. I've worn out my shoes and blistered my knuckles knockin' on doors...and here you're cryin' about a job.... We should be celebrating.... Okay look--you start cleaning things up here. I've got a surprise...

[FRANK exits while MIKE starts to clean up]

MIKE:

R-E-D...Red....P-A-I-N-T...Paint.

[Frank returns with beer cans behind his back]

Dad, red paint!

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FRANK:

From the top...

FRANK and MIKE:

R-E-D...Red.

FRANK:

Time to celebrate your new job. [puts cans in front of MIKE]

MIKE:

WOW!

FRANK:

Now don't tell your mother, 'cause she'd have a fit.... Do you think you can keep a secret?

MIKE:

Secret.

FRANK:

You open your own.

MIKE:

Like in the poker game.

FRANK:

Like the poker games. Here's to your new job, Mr. Woodhead....

[holds out his can]

Now you tap your can to mine...: Good. Bottoms.

[MIKE makes a face after drinking]

I thought you liked beer...

MIKE:

Is this diet beer?

FRANK:

It's your mother's idea.... I think this is the last of it. Now you make a toast.

MIKE:

To Knothead...my best teacher.

FRANK:

Aces! [they drink] You start in April. Keep your head up, chin out and think good thoughts. Pay day will roll around just like that. You'll have green in your jeans.

MIKE:

For poker.

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FRANK:

You got a one track...look, we only play every other month now. I can barely scrape together my ante.

MIKE:

Can I play?

FRANK:

Mike, this is just for my friends. You don't want to gamble away your first check.

MIKE:

I want to be like you...make wood and play poker.

FRANK:

Hey, I'm no hero.

MIKE:

Play poker.

FRANK:

There's a lot of rules in poker...a lot of strategy.

MIKE:

Please....

FRANK:

We'll talk after you get your first paycheck. You ought to be playing with people your own age...

[MIKE puts his arm around FRANK]

Maybe they play cards up at Millside.

[MIKE now tries to hug his father]

Cut that out! You're a workin' stiff now. Maybe after you work up to a full wage, when you can tell the difference between a flush and a straight...

MIKE:

When I get a paycheck.

FRANK:

I hear your mother pullin' up.

MIKE: [checking]

Yeah.

FRANK:

We gotta get rid of this beer.... You know what she'll say.... Here, chew this gum.

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DR. GOODMAN ENTERS AND IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ASSISTANT. ROUSING MUSIC IS PLAYING, AS IN A GAME SHOW. TOGETHER THEY SET UP A PRODUCT DISPLAY FOR SPANWAY. THIS SETTING UP BECOMES THE LEAD IN TO THE NEXT SCENE.

DR. GOODMAN SHOULD BE THE SAME AS JACK ALDAHL...PERHAPS WITH SLIGHT APPEARANCE CHANGE; LIKE WEARING GLASSES.

WHILE THIS IS GOING ON FRANK AND MIKE EXIT.

THE FIRST CARD ON THE DISPALY SAYS CONTAINS THE SCENE TITLE. A SPOTLIGHT HITS THIS AND WE ARE AT THE TOP OF SCENE 4.

DR. GOODMAN:

SCENE 4: Multi-Level Redemption....Marketing Your Future...

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MULTI-LEVEL REDEMPTION/MARKETING YOUR FUTURE

SETTING: ON STAGE IS A PRODUCT DISPLAY FOR SPANWAY PRODUCTS. IT IS A PYRAMID OF SAMPLE BOXES. THERE IS A BLACKBOARD BEHIND IT WHICH DR. GOODMAN USES TO ILLUSTRATE HIS TALK. REALLY, HE USES IT MOSTLY TO EMPHASIZE KEY WORDS. THERE COULD BE A FLIP CHART NEARBY. HE MAY BE ASSISTED BY A "GIRL" WHO HOLDS THE PRODUCT AND SMILES OR SOLICITS AUDIENCE PEOPLE.

THIS SPANWAY PRESENTATION IS GIVEN DIRECTLY TO THE AUDIENCE. IT IS A CROSS BETWEEN A MEDICINE SHOW AND REVIVALIST MEETING IN ITS TONE.

HIS FIRST RHETORICAL LINES COULD BE EVEN DIRECTED AT PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE AS HE WALKS UP AND DOWN THE AISLE.

GOODMAN IS HALF JOLLY AND WITTY AND THE OTHER HALF IS SOPHISTICATED AND URBANE. HE, AT ONE TIME, WANTS THE AUDIENCE TO IDENTIFY WITH HIM, AND AT THE OTHER END WANTS TO APPEAR ROYAL--A PERSON TO ASPIRE TOWARD.

JANEY AND FRANK ARE IN THE AUDIENCE OR VISIBLY ENTER AND SIT ON STAGE... AS THOUGH PART OF THE AUDIENCE ALSO.

DR. GOODMAN: [walking down the aisle]
Has anyone here ever known tough times? I mean really tough, hard, down on your luck, out-of-work tough times?

[At this time he may solicit actual audience response]

Eighteen months after I was let go from the University...at the age of 34. Eighteen months after I joined Spanway and began to use "the plan". And I retired at the age of 36.

DR. GOODMAN:

That was 7 years ago.

Next week my wife, Nancy, and I will get dressed up in a fine gown and tuxedo. I'll put my 30-ott-6 in the back of my silver Cadillac and we'll drive out into the desert. There on the sand I'll place an alarm clock between two golden candles. There, as the sun sets, Nancy and I will toast our new life with Mum's champagne.

Then I'll load my rifle and blast that God awful 9-5 symbol!!

DR. GOODMAN:

We go back to the spot each time this year to celebrate our Spanway Anniversary.

[mounting the stage]

Tonight I want to share with you how to escape that rat race.

[pause]

Seven years ago I went to the same kind of meeting you've come to tonight. I sat in the audience and listened to some joker strutting up on stage in a three piece suit, wearing a cowboy hat...telling me I had only myself to blame for my poverty.

Seven years ago, I saw the plan.... Heard the cowboy spinning the same yarn I'm spinning here tonight.... But I was a professional! I was on the way up.... I had a numbered parking spot in the Faculty Parking Lot.... Sales was too crass.

FRANK:

Honey, what are we doing her?

JANEY:

Uncle Albert said it wouldn't cost anything.

FRANK:

If we left now we could make it to the grocery before it closes....

JANEY:

Let's just see what he has to say.

DR. GOODMAN:

But you know, life is funny.... Seven years ago the University showed me the way out.... They sent me a little piece of paper called a RIF Notice.... That's a fancy collegiate way of saying, you're fired...laid off...unemployed!

I couldn't believe it.... I didn't even tell my wife for a whole week.... All those years in student housing...all those Saturdays I spent preparing lessons in the library when the sun was begging me to come outside.... The lousy jobs Nancy took just so I could become Doctor Goodman.

Life is funny.... I laughed so hard I cried.... And when the tears dried and I look in my wallet and found only plastic credit cards.... Well, I got desperate.... Do you know how many PhD's are out looking for work these days?

Today I live in a 30-room mansion, drive a new Cadillac every year, have an outdoor pool...indoor sauna. I don't do my own lawns, my gardner does it. But all my good things won't do you any good.....because they're mine!

But I will tell you tonight how I got them.

[Points to the sales pyramid on the flip chart]

It took me 18 months to get a down line system.

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FRANK:

I want to go, Janey.

JANEY:

Uncle Albert says it's the best opportunity he's ever had.

FRANK:

Was that before or after Alcoholics Anonymous?

JANEY:

How many benefit weeks do you have left, Frank?

DR. GOODMAN:

All you need are 6 friends to start your empire. Six friends and a sample case like this...

[assistant shows off box]

Begin with 6 friends, and you're on your way to earning $7500 a month...based on bonuses alone.

You say you can't impose on 6 friends? Well then, you're going to be in dark stinking trouble when you pass away...because you'll need to impose on 6 friends just to carry you out.

So, why not share the joy of economic opportunity with them while you're still alive!

But even if you never recruit one other person.... How many of you could use an extra $300 a month for only 8-10 hours of work a week?

[JANEY raises hand]

FRANK:

Put your hand down! I'm not going to finger my friend's wallet!

JANEY:

We could just try it.... I'll help.

FRANK:

What would our friends think?

JANEY:

That you're a hard worker.

FRANK:

I don't want to be called Frank Spanway. I'm going to the car.

[She tries to hold him back.]

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DR. GOODMAN:

I didn't raise my hand the first time either... Some joker saying I could earn $50,000 a year in my spare time! I'm no fool. Sounded like a snake oil meeting to me.

But I took my wife.... My wife is so dumb she fell for the whole load...hook, line and sinker.... Swallowed the whole pitch.... Nancy's so stupid.

[dramatic pause]

THANK GOD!!

[FRANK exits...JANEY hesitatingly rises and goes down]

DR. GOODMAN:

I want you to come down now...take that first step to economic freedom. Begin today with a free sample.... It costs you nothing but your time!

[JANEY walks down towards GOODMAN, he shakes her hand and hands her a box]

Welcome to Spanway.... All right, who is next?....

[music, lights]

END OF ACT 1

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SCENE 1: CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

SETTING: AS THE AUDIENCE RETURNS TO THE THEATRE THEY FIND ON THE WALL PROJECTIONS OF HEADLINES RELATED TO FOOD BANKS, HOMELESSNESS, POVERTY. THE SCENE TITLE IS ALSO PROJECTED: ACT II, SCENE 1-CONFLICT OF INTERESTS.

LIGHTS THEN COME UP AS THE SCENE BEGINS IN FRANK'S LIVING ROOM. SEATED AT A POKER TABLE ARE JAMES, DOLORES, AND ANDY. IN A NEARBY KITCHEN AREA, JANEY IS PREPARING SOME FOOD.

ENTER DOLORES AND JAMES. THEY ARE CARRYING BEER AND SNACKS.

JAMES IS RECENTLY RETIRED. HE IS NICKNAMED "COMMISSAR" BECAUSE HE WAS AN OLD LEFTY IN THE UNION ORGANIZING DAYS OF THE MILL. HE HAS BEEN A PAST UNION PRESIDENT. HE IS A VERY GREGARIOUS AND VERBAL KIND OF FELLA.

ANDY IS NATIVE LITHUANIAN. HE IS A BIG KIND-HEARTED MAN WHO USUALLY LAUGHS AT ANYTHING. HE IS THE BIG BACK SLAPPER KIND. HE HAS A SLIGHT ACCENT. HE IS NAIVE AND PEOPLE LIKE TO TEASE THIS BIG-HEARTED, BEARISH GUY. WHEN HE SULKS, HE DOES SO IN THE EXAGGERATED TONES OF A CHILD. HIS NICKNAME IS "WHIMPY" TO MAKE FUN OF HIS SIZE. HE IS IN HIS LATE 20's OR EARLY 30's.

DOLORES LOVES TO TAUNT ANDY. ANDY IS ALWAYS DODGING HER BARBS.

EVERYONE HAS JUST SAT DOWN TO PLAY. ANDY IS ROLLING UP HIS SLEEVES, DOLORES IS DISTRIBUTING CHIPS, JAMES PUTS ON A VISOR AND LIGHTS A CIGAR.

FRANK ENTERS. HE IS WEARING A BIRD'S NEST AS A HAT. HE IS CARRYING AND SIX-PACK OF BEER. THE OTHERS STARE AND LAUGH AT HIM, BUT FRANK IGNORES THEM.

FRANK:

Ice-a-cc.d-a-beer.

DOLORES:

Refreshments. Let's deal.

JAMES:

Okay Knothead, what's it about?

FRANK:

I'm shuffling cards.

ANDY:
Did your mama forget to set your clothes out for you?

FRANK:
Hey Whimpy, at least I washed my clothes first.

DOLORES:
Are we playing cards or is this a fashion show?

JAMES:
Trying to cover up your dandruff?

FRANK:
Why would you say that?

JAMES: [gesturing]
A little birdie told me.

FRANK:
Oh that.... Let's see, what are we playing?

ANDY:
What's the nest for?

JAMES:
He forgot his lucky necktie.

FRANK:
This is a symbol of my new luck!

JAMES:
What happened to the tie?

FRANK:
Commissar, the old luck just ran out.... This is my new charm.

DOLORES:
This is a fashion show.

FRANK:
This is a very practical matter.

ANDY:
Do they crap on your shoulder too?

FRANK:
This, my friends, is a very special nest. Only one bird is allowed to nest up there.

ANDY:
The coo-coo bird.

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JAMES:

More like the Dodo.

FRANK:

You've got to think bigger than your soup bowl. Andy is wearing his red kerchief, Dolores her union button—

ANDY:

And you got a dumb bird's nest.

FRANK:

Dont be such a twit, Whimpy. I'm sure Dolores understands what this is all about.

ANDY:

What is it Dolores?

DOLORES:

And how should I know. Frank isn't called Knothead for nothing.

[mockingly, accusingly]

You think I'm one too?

ANDY:

Oh, no...I didn't mean that...

[others laugh at ANDY'S embarrassment]

FRANK:

Yes sir, only one bird is going to sit up here...

[TAKES OUT WALLENT AND TWO BILLS TO IMITATE FLAPPING BIRD]

Usually he nests right in here with all the other eagles....and then I'm sorry to say he flies away. But tonight the eagle is going to squat right here at this hand! Because they'll be standing in line waiting to see this penthouse ol' Knothead has fixed up for them.

ANDY:

What a Hose Head.

FRANK:

Have you looked inside?

ANDY:

Inside what?

FRANK: [points to realty sign on nest]

At this deluxe accommodation.

[ANDY GETS UP TO LOOK IN BUT FRANK RISES WITH HIM TO OBSCURE HIS VISION]

Not so fast! Can't you read the sign: By Appointment Only.

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JAMES:
You piled it so deep I'm up to my nostrils in bird crap.

DOLORES:
Let's play cards.

JAMES:
What's the ante?

FRANK: [dealing]
5 card stud, quarter ante!

DOLORES:
A quarter.... Is this the only hand?

FRANK:
It's what we usually play.

JAMES:
Are we going to re-hash that again?

DOLORES:
It's a nickel until we all get work.

FRANK:
What's your problem, Dolores? You're still workin'.

ANDY:
James is always sayin' we're in for another depression.

DOLORES:
James reads too many radical books.
[JAMES makes face at DOLORES]

ANDY:
When you're out of work it's a depression!

DOLORES:
You got a point, Andy--

JAMES:
When I see Andy teaming up with Dolores that makes it a Depression!

ANDY:
Let's start with a nickel and then work up to a quarter.

FRANK:
Andy, you were only out 8 weeks before your uncle put you on, James has his Social Security, Dolores works swing at the mill...and I'm over the halfway mark with benefits...over 26 weeks.... Besides, I'm the dealer, I call the hand, I call the ante!

DOLORES:
Frank, we're just trying to--

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FRANK: [exploding]
Look, I give up a lot of things to be in this stinkin' game! The last thing I expect is for my friends to come over and treat me like some damn welfare case! Don't wet your hankies over me. If one of you is tight this month I'm good for you.... I got 25 dollars, and I'm playin' 'til I'm boom or bust.

JAMES:
Deal all ready, a man on a pension won't argue.

DOLORES:
I'm in.

[Everyone tosses in chips]

ANDY:
Deuces?

FRANK:
Okay Whimpo, deuces wild...

[All examine their hands, MIKE enters.]

ANDY:
Hey sport!

MIKE:
Hey Whimpy!

ANDY:
So now I'm Whimpy to ya....

FRANK:
Mike!

MIKE:
Hey Andy!

FRANK:
Ever since he got his job in April, he's been reachin' to fill my shoes.

DOLORES:
Where are you working Mike?

MIKE:
Millside.

ANDY:
You mean that workshop?...[awkward pause]...uh...when did ya start?

MIKE:
I got my first paycheck 1 week ago, May 2nd.

FRANK:
Not now, Mike.

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JAMES:

Ya got a union up there?

MIKE:

What?

DOLORES:

What do you do up there Mike?

MIKE:

Fix furniture.

JAMES:

Just like you and Knothead do in the shop...?

MIKE:

Kinda. But I'd rather work—

FRANK:

Not now, Mike! I open with a red.

DOLORES:

We're off and runnin'...I'm in.

JAMES:

Out....I fold.

[hands cards to MIKE who pretends to be in game]

ANDY:

I'm a sucker...[tosses in chips]

FRANK: [to DOLORES]

How many?

[DOLORES ignores FRANK]

DOLORES:

I bet you're proud of that check.

FRANK:

Dolores, hello....your turn.

MIKE:

You wanta see it?

[DOLORES nods. He fishes in his pockets for the check]

FRANK:

Dolores...not now...ding-ding...long distance.... How many?

DOLORES:

Don't rush me...I only want one.

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FRANK:

I'm not dealing you a flush.

DOLORES:

A flush?

ANDY:

If you're taking orders, I'd like 2 pretty ladies.

FRANK: [deals]

No way.

ANDY: [looking at cards]

You sure have a cold touch.

FRANK:

Dealer takes two

[MIKE slaps down check in front of DOLORES]

MIKE:

My first one.

DOLORES:

I remember my first one...long time ago.

[passes check to JAMES]

FRANK:

We don't want to be bothered Mike. This is poker.

MIKE:

Can I play?

FRANK:

You ain't practiced yet.

DOLORES:

You can play with me, Mike.

[others laugh at double meaning]

MIKE:

I want my own hand.... You said when I got a job--

FRANK:

When you got a full paycheck.

JAMES:

It's for 100 bucks...that ain't bad in these times.

FRANK:

For a month.

JAMES:

A month! 100 bucks a month! You mean it's part time?

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FRANK:

Full time...piece rate.

JAMES:

That's subminimum!

FRANK:

It's called contract work.

JAMES:

You mean they got a union contract that pays a kid 100 dollars a month?!

FRANK:

It's a sheltered workshop...companies bring in odd jobs, their piece work pay depends on how much they put out and how big the contract is.

JAMES:

It's still subminimum.

DOLORES:

Commissar, maybe he's in some kind of apprenticeship.

JAMES:

Is our swing shift steward apologizing for management?

DOLORES:

You're stepping in it again, James.

FRANK:

They got to meet certain quotas before they get minimum wage.

JAMES:

Remember in '68 when we went out against the piece rate.... It's a crime to think that in '82—

[others groan at old story]

ANDY:

Let's just play cards.

DOLORES:

Drop it James.

JAMES: [standing]

Like you drop every other issue?

DOLORES:

I don't want to hear belly achin' from a pensioneer....

JAMES:

You're talking to the man who got blacklisted so your union could get certified...so you could be a steward someday-- [leaves table]

DOLORES:

We've heard those stories a hundred times.

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FRANK:
Let's get off the soap box and onto this hand.

MIKE: [sits in JAMES' chair]
Yeah.... Let's play.

[they all watch in tense silence]

FRANK:
Gimme that check.... Look Sport, 100 bucks...what is that? I used to make that much on overtime in one weekend.... Come back when you got a real paycheck! ...Now let's bet.

[MIKE gets up, sullenly]

Here, take the dumb check.... Come on...let's play...I'm upping you a blue.

MIKE: [exiting--half to himself]
I don't want that dumb check.

[throws down check]

FRANK:
Dolores, are you in?

[JAMES picks up check]

DOLORES: [disgusted]
I'm out.

ANDY:
Me too.

DOLORES:
I'm going to help Janey with the sandwiches.

FRANK:
You come to eat or play?

DOLORES:

[taking the check from JAMES, follows after MIKE]

I'll give it to Mike, if I can find him.

FRANK:
What a softie.... Look, this game is getting cold.... Mike's got his own friends...I been teachin' him about cards...he's just not ready yet.

JAMES:
Let's deal.

ANDY:
It's my deal...2 up and 4 down....

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JAMES:

Another Lithuanian game?

ANDY:

You'll see.

[dealing]

FRANK:

Deuces wild?

ANDY:

Ante a nickel...[FRANK glares]
...all right, a dime....4 down, 2 up, Queen opens.

FRANK:

Queen lays down a red...so Mr. Eagle will know where to squat.

JAMES:

You must be talkin' to ugly ducklins, 'cause I raise you.

ANDY:

I'm in.... Here's one down and one more up.... Queen still high.

FRANK:

Are you going to deal the whole deck? ... [looking at cards].

And now she's got company...here's blue to you...[blue chip]

JAMES:

You're a lousy con artist.... I call you.

ANDY:

Too rich for me.... I fold.

JAMES:

I go on cards, not guts.... You in?

FRANK:

Flush, Queen high...let's see your powerhouse.

JAMES:

You were bluffin'! Full house.... Say "good-bye Eagles."

[FRANK GROANS AND SLUMPS...
SCENE NOW SHIFTS TO KITCHEN WHERE DOLORES IS HELPING JANEY. DOLORES SNIFFS MEAT AS THE POKER GAME RESUMES IN MIME.]

DOLORES:

Are you sure this meat is all right?

JANEY:

They remove the labels before they give it out.

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DOLORES:

What are they hiding?

JANEY:

The stores don't want paying customers to know it's being given away.

DOLORES:

What's wrong with it?

JANEY:

Nothing, Dolores. They agree to give so much each month. Sometimes it's dated, or the package is torn, a jar lid is loose...better'n throwing it away.

DOLORES:

I'm surprised Frank hasn't raised holy hell.

JANEY:

[Puts hand on DOLORES' shoulder, facing her straight on]

Sh-h-h, he doesn't know.

DOLORES:

Where does he think you bought it?

JANEY:

He hasn't been paying any attention to finances or what I bring home...He still thinks our food money lasts the month.

DOLORES:

Does he still think you're just volunteering at the Food Bank?

JANEY:

I still am.

DOLORES:

Isn't that a conflict of interest?

JANEY:

Don't be silly!

DOLORES:

I'm just teasin'. I know you've put in a lot of hours down there.

JANEY:

[changing the topic...returns to preparing food]

I could tell you stories about your neighbors, except we're supposed to keep the names confidential.

DOLORES:

Do you think you can keep Frank from finding out?

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JANEY:
I have to. Frank has worked steady for over 15 years...it's real hard on him. I make Frank go out everyday to look for work, or help my father fix things. I don't want him sitting around and turning into a Salvation Army bum.

DOLORES:
I remember Weyerhaeuser moved south....when my father was laid off. No severance, no job, no future.... One day he just stopped lookin' and started drinking...like day into night.... But Frank's solid, made from granite.

JANEY:
Don't you breathe a word of this to him.

DOLORES:
You know, Janey, I've got some extra this month....If you--

JANEY: [laughs]
Extra? With that hulking son of yours? Aren't you always telling us how hard it is to be a single parent?

DOLORES:
Look girl, I've got savings...just like you and Frank.

JANEY:
I didn't mean it that way.

DOLORES:
You and Frank helped me out when Bill left--

JANEY:
How can we dress up these cold cuts?

DOLORES:
We can doctor it with onions and garlic. They won't even know it's meat when I get through with it.... Of course, you'd have to pay me back later.
[pause--hug]
Thanks.

JANEY:
Of course....I'll get Mike to help serve. Did you see him?

DOLORES:
Uh...he came out and showed us his check.... Wanted to play cards.

JANEY:
Oh no.... What did Frank say?

DOLORES: [evasively]
Mike was real proud of his check.

JANEY:
What did Frank say?

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DOLORES:
We were in the middle of a hand....

JANEY:
I've got to find Mike--

DOLORES:
I can finish these...I think he was heading for the shop....

JANEY:
Thanks Dolores...[exits]

DOLORES:
Come and get it!

[Poker players amble into kitchen]

ANDY:
Sure smells good.

JANEY:
That's your native Lithuanian garlic and onion spread.

FRANK:
Whose inspiration was this?

DOLORES:
We need to spice up these games a little.

FRANK:
If I eat one of these, my father-in-law won't get under the hood with me for a week.

DOLORES:
That should make you grateful.

ANDY:
This is delicious,...how come we never did this before? We need a beer.

JAMES: [teasing]
And spoil the mood--I think we need a Chablis.

FRANK:
We ought to feel lucky we got sandwiches. You should hear some of the stories Janey brings home from the Food Bank.

DOLORES:
Things are tough all over.... There's only 4 people left on my shift.... It's like a ghost town.... Only the computer is gettin' overtime.... We can't take lunch anymore at the same time.... I play a lot of double solitaire.

ANDY:
Yeah, and computers don't buy color tv's.

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JAMES:

Or pay union dues.... Everything is so screwed up today.... Not like it was. If I talk union politics I need a drink to convince myself it's important.... We're fighting over things that'll be gone or obsolete in the next negotiations.... Kinda makes a serious thing into a joke.... And all my jokes are starting to sound serious to me.

ANDY:

If I get called back I'm gonna sign up on the computerized saw.... I want a little job security next time.

JAMES:

Don't stop there.... Ask to be a Green Hat too.

ANDY:

I pay my dues, James! I hit the bricks when they give the word.

ENTERS JANEY

FRANK:

Where's the beer hon?

JANEY: [angry]

Can't you think of anyone but Frank Bolles?!

ANDY:

I've got a bottle in the car.

JAMES:

What are we waitin' for? Let's go get a sample.

[JAMES and ANDY exit]

DOLORES:

I'll go tally the chips. [exiting]

FRANK:

The game's not over.

DOLORES:

I've got a 5 A.M. steward's meeting tomorrow. [exits]

FRANK:

One lousy game this month, is that too much to ask?!

JANEY:

That's what I want to know... Would it have been so bad to deal him a few cards?

FRANK:

These are my friends, my poker night.... He's got his own friends.

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JANEY:
Mike worships the ground you walk on.... He thinks your word is God.

FRANK:
He can't even tell a club from a spade.

JANEY:
He doesn't have to play in the game.... He just wants to hold a few cards.

FRANK:
This is my night.... It would be embarrassing.

JANEY:
How can he embarrass anyone who wears a bird's nest?
You had no business telling him his check was no good. When he brought that check home, he wanted to give it all to you for some silly tool....He was so proud of that money, he was going to surprise you with it....What does Dolores' son do? He buys dope with his money and the Carson's daughter moves out and never even writes them, not even a thank you for all those years.... And you have a son that sweats away for less than 50 cents an hour...and he wants to hand it all over to you!

FRANK:
It would have looked silly...a dummy hand.

JANEY:
You're still embarrassed by him, aren't you?

FRANK:
Don't push it sweet pea! I don't go out no more! Gave up the bowling league, and nobody sees me at the Gin Mill anymore...just so I can afford my poker night! Do I have to give that up too? I taught him woodworking, do I have to teach him poker too?

JANEY:
We're always going to be his teachers as well as his parents.

FRANK:
Get off my back! I'll work with him in the shop tomorrow. He'll forget about it.

JANEY:
He wants to be a man now....he wants to play in your game because he thinks that's what a man does...that's what his dad does.

FRANK:
He can't just waltz into my life like that.... I don't ask to pal around with his friends all day...

JANEY:
I'm leaving this check by your bedstand to remind you.

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FRANK:

It's never gonna be equal...

JANEY:

You're right.... He's got a job.... [exits]

FRANK:

He wouldn't have that job if it wasn't for me.... Nobody helped me get my first job.

[to himself]

Why does he want to be like me?!

[JACK enters and hands FRANK a newspaper. FRANK sits and reads...later he exits]

I can't even connect with the Help Wanted....

JACK THEN ARRANGES SOME MATERIALS HE WILL USE BEFORE THE BANK BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

IT IS A DISPLAY OF A VAN CONVERTED WITH TOILET AND COOK STOVE ADDED TO IT. THIS COULD BE DONE WITH CHARTS. IT IS NOT CLEAR IF THIS IS FOR PRACTICE OR FOR REAL.....PERHAPS HE IS FACING A GROUP OF CHAIRS WITH CARDBOARD CHARACTERS IN THEM]

JACK:

I want to thank the Board of Director for making time in their busy agenda....

As you can see, the porta-potty fits here and the camp stove goes there. It's all bolted down and the customer leaves a $125.00 deposit. I know it's not enough, but it keeps him honest....I mean they don't want to live in this forever....

Look, look....Didn't you see 60 minutes last week: "Apartments On Wheels".

....Here look at this article:

"Salvation Army requests help for homeless. People needing beds exceeds space by 65% ."

It's a natural. They rent a van to find a job in Texas. But they get there and they find the streets aint lined with silver. People have to live somewhere.

This is shear genius.....Okay, okay.....if people are living out of their cars then it's only humanitarian to make it comfortable to live out of their U-HAUL....

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JACK:

[to audience]

And you thought I didn't care...I think about my neighbors all the time. They've got to live somewhere....when they hit the road. I mean we're talking about a nation on the move.....A nation of families looking for opportunity on the Interstate!

When they rent their next van....I want it to have a toilet and a stove! It's a jungle out there and somebody's got to help.

Act II, Scene 2: HEAD HUNTERS AND BODY SNATCHERS

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SCENE 2: HEADHUNTERS AND BODY SNATCHERS

SETTING: CAREER LIFT OFF OFFICE. AT A TABLE SITS FRANK OPPOSITE A JOB COUNSELOR, MR. MATSON. MATSON IS NICELY GROOMED, PRECISE PERSON NOT UNLIKE A DENTIST. FRANK IS WEARING A TIE AND IS UNEASY IN HIS INTERVIEW CLOTHES.

MATSON:
It's amazing what computers can do today Mr. Frank.

FRANK:
Just Frank.

MATSON:
[reaches below desk to console and gets print-out]

Ah, here it is.... Your Occupational Profile indicates your interests are compatible with the fields of Material Control, Elemental Mechanical Work, and Sales.

FRANK:
How do you figure that?

MATSON:
Oh, I don't do the figuring...we paid over $6000 for this computer and the customized software... This is the new Career-Tronic System. Didn't you read the Career Lift-Off brochure?

FRANK:
You're the only head hunters in town.

MATSON:
That term is completely passe...We are a professional career guidance and placement service.

FRANK:
I just want to know what kind of jobs I can get.

MATSON:
Let me look in our D.O.T. Reference Text to see which ones match your print out.

[begins looking in thick text: Dictionary of Occupational Titles]

FRANK:
I've been to the state employment office every Monday along with all the other eager beavers. Put caps on my heels and toes, but I'm even wearing those down.

MATSON:

All right, here are some job titles:
Under Materials Control we have
Job Tracer 387.034
Shipping and Receiving Assistant 222.687
Tool Crib Attendant 222-137
For Elemental Mechanical Occupations there is listed
Quarry Worker 939.36--

FRANK:

Quarry Worker! Where are they doing that kind of work around here?
[MATSON looks puzzled]
Okay, okay...where do I apply?

MATSON:

For what?

FRANK:

Don't you give me some kind of interview card or somethin'?

MATSON:

Look, I'll give you our no-cost Job Search Kit. If you follow these directions and keep at it you should be able to locate work within 6 weeks. You only paid the 25 dollar intake-counseling fee....

FRANK:

I should have charged you that much for listening to all this crap you been spoutin'. Have you ever had to look for a job? Hell, I don't need a list of fancy names and numbers...I just want an interview.

MATSON:

Now you're talking our full service package. That includes complete resume building, a marketing program combined with a mailing campaign.

FRANK:

I don't care what you call it...just so it gets me work. How much does it cost?

MATSON:

That depends on how much time you want to buy. It can range from 600 to 1200 dollars.

FRANK: [pause]

What can you do for another 25?

MATSON:

Give you our resume building kit. Of course that wouldn't include printing but you could use the original copy at a Xerox and send them out yourself...I'll also supply you with a computer listing of possible employers to contact.

FRANK: [to himself]

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That's 2 months of poker.... unless I sell another tool.

MATSON:

Have you seen our sample resumes?

[takes out samples]

FRANK: [to himself]

I'm going to have to sell the band saw....

MATSON:

As you can see, there are several possibilities. Some people prefer the simple and clean Venice print while others favor the Boldini Style. Personally, I recommend Futura on embossed pink buff...maybe a 20 pound weight paper.

FRANK:

How does this get me a job?

MATSON:

Ah, the employment game floats on a sea of paper: applications, cards, cover letters, thank you notes, resumes. Usually a $4 an hour clerk is assigned the job of sifting through it all.... Now, how are you going to get her attention? First off, you send a cover letter on personalized letterhead stationary like this one here. It arrives inside a bi-fold portfolio with your resume inside. Nice, aren't they? Clear margins, typeset headings, brief staccato statements that really sell! Could you honestly put down this golden rod in red Itaglio with Silver colored headings? [pause]

MATSON:

Soon your resume floats to the top while the others find their home in the circular file....
It's all one big game of chance, and this helps you increase the odds. A resume like this one raises the ante in your favor.

FRANK:

Now that makes sense.... How much is it?

MATSON:

The plain white copy which you Xerox and send out yourself starts at only $45.50. If we print it on this lovely pastel stock with typesetting, it goes up to $90.00.

FRANK:

A wood worker doesn't look good in pastel.

MATSON:

You won't be just another wood worker when I get through with you. I'll analyze your work experience, hobbies, interests, aptitudes and come up with transferrable skills written in the language businessmen respect. We'll creatively package and target your marketable job skills.

FRANK:

You hate little words, don't you?

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MATSON:

I disdain the mediocre.

FRANK:

Can I give you 25 now and 25 after it arrives?

MATSON:

We're not a credit union...

[closes binder and thinks]

But you have been out of work a long time. I'll gamble on you being good for it.

FRANK:

I feel better when both of us are gambling.... Makes the odds seem more even. Thank you, Mr. Matson.

MATSON:

It should be in the mail to you in about 2 weeks.

FRANK:

And I get that computer job list too?

MATSON:

You'll get our complete 45.50 package.... Remember, you can always to to typeset if you notify me by the end of the week.... Please give it some consideration.

FRANK:

If you're willing to be paid in "consideration" instead of cash—

[Exiting]

MATSON:

See what a marvelous salesman you make—a quick wit and repartee.

MATSON GETS UP AND PUTS ON A POSTAL HAT AND A MAIL POUCH. THEN MATSON PUTS THE RESUMES IN A LARGE ENVELOPE AND SEALS IT.....

MATSON WALKS OVER TO THE KITCHEN AREA AND LEAVES SEVERAL ENVELOPES THERE. JANEY WALKS IN PICKS UP THE MAIL. SHE IS SHOCKED AT THE RESUME BILL.

MATSON RESUMES ROLE OF JACK/NARRATOR AND BEGINS READING A NEWSPAPER WANT ADS

JANEY:

50 Dollars....for a resume!.....We don't have this kind of money!
.....Oh....another insurance bill.....The well is bone dry...

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JACK/MATSON:

"Manager Trainee....$20-30,000/year.
We're looking for happy, motivated people. We offer 6 months of specialized training while we train and groom you for sales management positions, service and establish accounts. Must be bondable and over 21...."

"Mature adult babysitter needed for toddler in our home. Mostly evening hours. Must have own transportation."

[exiting]

ACT II, SCENE 3: Pastel Blue Collar

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SCENE 3: PASTEL BLUE COLLAR

SETTING: FRANK IS SITTING IN HIS BATHROBE READING THE WANT ADS. JANEY ENTERS WITH THE MAIL. SHE HAS A LARGE ENVELOPE WITH AN INSURANCE POLICY IN IT.

JANEY:

Frank, please get dressed today.

FRANK:

What for?I did your grocery shopping yesterday. Besides I got to wait by the phone in case I get lucky.

JANEY:

Are you going to an interview in your bathrobe?

FRANK:

Look, I've made sacrifices! Every tool has gone back except Gramp's saw....It's not fair....Somebody has changed the rules so I can't compete no more.....

JANEY:

Lots of families are worse off ....I know it's hard to stay home with nothing to do...That's why I shoo you out---that's why I want you to get dressed and go--

FRANK:

Janey what did I do wrong? Why am I being punished like this?
....Laid off in September when it's turning cool, and now it's June and I'm still cold....

JANEY:

You're not alone, Frank....We're all feeling the hurt.

FRANK:

I used to love working off my weekends in the shop...Work till my ass was flaggin'. I was the guy who cursed Monday. Now I curse having to get up at all....
I wake up and don't want to crawl out of bed....
I go grocery shopping around 10 o'clock--
People wondering why an able bodied man pushes around a food cart
in the middle of the day.....

JANEY:

Think if you were Mike...What would your prospects be? He was lucky he had a father like you. It paid off. Feel good inside about that! Be proud of him ...You aren't a quitter Frank...I love you for that.....[hugs him]....I didn't realize the shopping would be like that. From now on--

FRANK:

It ain't just that....It's gettin up and lookin at these empty hands each day....I don't know where to put them anymore.

JANEY:
[Embraces him, but he is stiff and unresponsive]

They don't have to be anywhere else but here...

FRANK:
[PULLING AWAY, CONFUSED...ANGRY. THE NEXT LINE IS STATED WITH COOL SARCASM OR FRUSTRATION]
You're always too darn understandin'!.....Did I get any mail?

JANEY:
You have this letter from the mill. [reading letter]
We have to "take over 100% of the insurance costs next month."

FRANK:
Everybody wants a piece!....Gimme that insurance policy!
[Handing it to him]
This is what you can do with it!
[Begins folding policy into small wad]

JANEY: [Stopping him]
We have to pay it Frank!

FRANK: [Unfolding the policy]
Ah, a message of hope...Maybe I am worth more dead or "dismembered".....

JANEY:
Better to be safe now...than sorry later.

FRANK:
Why are we gamblin' on bein' sorry later...It's pretty sorry right now...And it isn't costin' us a dime.

JANEY:
Who spent 50 dollars on a resume?

FRANK:
I gave you every damn penny from the equipment I sold!

JANEY;
Our bills are getting out of control!

FRANK:
I don't want to talk about it.

JANEY:
Where do you think the food comes from at the end of the month?

FRANK:
JANEY! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING !?!?

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[Silence as they stare at one another]

JANEY:
You're not the only one who makes do...You're not the only person making sacrifices, Frank Bolles!

FRANK:
I eat out of the Food Bank...And my dumb, retarded son works more than me--

JANEY:
I've even had to take a few dollars from Dolores at the end of the month....I wasn't going to tell you Frank...But I can't shoulder all of it...by myself....
Not when you talk like this! I wish I could make somebody call you for an interview---but I can't...

FRANK:
Dolores!....You took from Dolores?

[FRANK SINKS INTO HIS CHAIR AS THOUGH HIS BREATH WERE KNOCKED OUT]

I got Dolores the job...got her the stewardship....

JANEY:
There's going to be a temporary opening at the Food Bank. I put in my application.
We could keep up the payments on the car, the house, the insurance....Until you find something.

FRANK: [to himself...in a daze]
Great! I'm the only one not working in this house!!!
Ain't I at least equal to a housewife?!
Didn't I teach that kid when nobody else would?
Now what do I got to show for it?.....

[GETTING UP WITH CONFUSED DETERMINATION THAT BECOME HESITANCY...WE WITNESS A SLIGHT MOMENTARY BREAK DOWN...]

I've got to get some cold, fresh air....No...no, I'm going down to the gin mill. Yeah...I'm going out...I need my hat...ah it's not that cold.....Janey, I'll be back...I mean....Of course I'll be back. Janey I got the damn want ads memorized...they call me by my first name down at that rat's nest, employment office.

JANEY:
Bandage up that self pity, Frank....Don't take the gin mill road!

FRANK:
You got a better map?

JANEY:
I can bring food home without anyone noticing....But when you go around drunk, there won't be anything left to hide.

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FRANK: [Turning, he slowly sits down]
Hell, I've only got pocket change...

JANEY:
Don't waste your money and time in a tavern....Keep it simple, Frank.

[laughing]
Your worst vice is cards.

FRANK:
Oh no! This week is poker night and I haven't got a stake. Can't we put off that insurance policy?
Send it to them next month...I'll phone the insurance company tomorrow.

JANEY: [Goes and gets Spanway box]
Maybe they'll take your resume as an IOU.

FRANK:
I'm not laughing.

JANEY:
You could try selling some of this Spanway--

FRANK:
Sure, kick a guy when he's down.

JANEY:
I sold $60.00 last month at a party.

FRANK:
Sixty bucks?!

JANEY:
Think about it Frank....Everybody needs soap. They might as well just buy it from you....and save themselves the gas and time.

[JANEY TOSSES THE SPANWAY TO FRANK AND EXITS.
FRANK SITTING WITH THE BOX, OPENS IT.

JACK ENTERS....FRANK AND JACK STARE AT ONE ANOTHER IN MOMENTARY SILENCE. THEN JACK HANDS FRANK THE NEWSPAPER.]

FRANK: [Reading the Want Ads]

"DISHWASHER. RELIABLE AND CLEAN. PART TIME EVENINGS. APPLY IN PERSON".
I guess I'm down to this.....

[HANDS PAPER BACK TO JACK....
FRANK GETS UP AND EXITS...]

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[JACK NOWS FADES BACK INTO A SIMPLE NARRATOR ROLE. HE HELPS IN THE SET UP OF PROPS FOR THE SCENE CHANGE. THIS CAN BE DONE IN FRONT OF THE AUDIENCE TO CLARIFY JACK'S NEW, SIMPLER ROLE]

JACK: [to the audience]

ACT II, SCENE 4: SHOOT THE MOON.

[Reads the paper and slowly exits]

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SCENE 4: SHOOT THE MOON

SETTING: IT IS POKER NIGHT AGAIN. THIS TIME IT'S A POT LUCK. PEOPLE ARE JUST ARRIVING, AS THEY SET UP THE POKER TABLE. DOLORES IS UNCOVERING THE SANDWICHES SHE HAS MADE WHEN JAMES AND ANDY: DROP IN CARRYING THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

BELOW THE TABLE, NEAR FRANK'S FEET, NOT VISIBLE TO OTHER CHARACTERS IS THE SPANWAY PRODUCTS BOX.

DOLORES:
White bread with bologna and cheese is for us junk food fans. Brown is whole wheat and salami...for James.

FRANK: [suspicious]
I thought you didn't like to cook.

DOLORES:
I love potlucks.

ANDY:
Here's some Lithuanian sausage to put hair on your chest. No offense Dolores.

DOLORES:
Grass doesn't grow on a playground, Whimpy.

ANDY:
Made it from my aunt's secret recipe.

FRANK:
You too....

ANDY:
It's like Kelbassa with fried onions, garlic and basil.

FRANK:
Now, I know you can't cook!

ANDY:
Wait 'til after you taste these, Knothead.

JAMES:
Here's the frosties.... Attitude adjustment time.

DOLORES:
Did you forget the controlled substances?

JAMES:
Yes, show that bulletin to FRANK.

DOLORES: [reading]
"Any employee found with a controlled substance on the premises shall be subject to immediate dismissal by management. Likewise, using a controlled substance to ameliorate one's condition during company time shall receive similar disciplinary action" ...Yours truly.

JAMES: [opening a beer]
Let's ameliorate.

ANDY:
Here's to good ol' amelioration. [everyone drinks]

FRANK:
With all this food Janey is going to be out of business.

DOLORES:
She deserves a break.

ANDY:
Where's the bird nest?

FRANK:
Don't need it tonight.

JAMES:
Marked cards this time?

FRANK:
Nope. I just feel great all over.

DOLORES:
Good. Last time you were a little bitchy....
[to ANDY]
Pardon my language.

FRANK:
I got me a fist full of chips, friends.... And I gave myself a great rub down in the shower.... Feel like a million bucks.

DOLORES:
Who did you shower with?
[laughter]

FRANK:
I'm glad you asked nosey-rosey....
[puts bar of soap on table]
With this little cutey right here.

ANDY:
I think Frank's been ameliorating before we got here.

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FRANK: [handing each a bar of soap]
Ever try this stuff? Smell it...go on! It's one of those special herbal jobs...

[reading package]
"Ch-chamo-meal and cinnamon."

JAMES:
Do you eat it after you bathe?

FRANK:
That cinnamon gives the ol' bod a tingle all over.

DOLORES:
This is crazy.

JAMES:
Knothead.... You playin' with a full deck?

ANDY:
Let's play.

JAMES DROPS HIS BAR OF SOAP. AS HE REACHES DOWN, HE DISCOVERS THE SPANWAY PACKAGE. HE REACHES IN AND TAKES OUT A CASSETTE TAPE BOX.

DOLORES:
Maybe next time we can have our game in a hot tub.

ANDY:
Sure Dolores.

DOLORES: [winking at ANDY who blushes]
I've been dying to suds you up for some time now.
[laughter]

JAMES:
What's this stuff FRANK?

FRANK:
Hey, that's none of your business!

JAMES: [reading the tape package:]
"Spanway Marketing Plan"....

DOLORES:
Is that what this stuff is?

JAMES: [reading]
"....retailing your friends....creating tax shelters...."

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FRANK:
I've never even listened to that tape.

JAMES:
He's turning our poker game into a Tupperware Party.

ANDY:
My wife has all the tupperware she needs.

FRANK:
This ain't no Tupperware....It's poker night...Gimme that soap back!

JAMES:
Can we listen to the tapes later?

FRANK:
Forget you! I was just trying to educate you Hozers...That's a laugh...Too dumb to see past your own nose!

JAMES:
Cinnamon?

FRANK:
I was going to let you win some of this stuff tonight.

ANDY:
Play for soap?

DOLORES:
[catching on, signalling the others]

Hey, that sounds like a good idea. We ought to try something new.

JAMES:
You been sniffin' the soap too?

DOLORES:
Come on James....You're always sayin' our lives are controlled by the almighty dollar. Let's play for something besides money.....[others begin to nod]

FRANK:
[suspicious and beginning to simmer]

What are you driving at Dolores!

DOLORES:
We're in a rut....Tonight we have new food....So let's try a new ante.

ANDY:
Sure, soap.

JAMES:
Why not? It's a friendly game. Besides I'm in too high a tax bracket anyway.

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[everyone laughs, except FRANK]

FRANK:
Wait a second! We've always played for 25 dollars.

JAMES:
So what.

FRANK:
I get it....You bring the food....Now we eliminate the pot....

DOLORES:
I just want to feel like a million dollars too. Aren't we entitled to that?

FRANK:
Here, keep the soap...It's on the house. I'm not playin' in any charity pot!
Did Janey put you up to this?
Well, I got a stake— [exits the room]

DOLORES:
Touchy...

JAMES:
He's always been an emotional guy.

ANDY:
What should we do?

JAMES:
Just go along.

ANDY:
I hope this game doesn't end like the last one.

[FRANK returns with MIKE'S paycheck.
FRANK slaps the check down on the tape]

FRANK:
Here's my stake....100 bucks! I can cover anybody who's short.

DOLORES:
Ease up FRANK.

JAMES:
You don't need to impress us.

FRANK:
Just put up or shut up. I got the first deal.

[FRANK begins shuffling cards,
while DOLORES hands out chips]

Whimpy, you call it.

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ANDY:

Dueces.

FRANK:

Again dueces....You got the originality of a rock.

ANDY:

That's Mike's check.

FRANK:

It's all in the family....Five card stud. Ante a quarter.

DOLORES:

Quarter?

[MIKE enters]

FRANK:

Get the chips out.

ANDY:

Hey, sport!

MIKE:

You're using my check?

FRANK:

Here Woodhead, try a sandwich.

MIKE:

Thanks.... [sits nearby...a silent "player"]

FRANK:

Dealer opens with a blue...I'm holding red-hot-coals tonight!

MIKE:

Can I play the next hand?

FRANK:

Don't be a pedigree pest....Have another sandwich.

JAMES:

I'm in.

DOLORES & ANDY:

Me too.

MIKE:

But you're using my check.

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FRANK:

I said, not tonight! How many ace?

MIKE:

My check.

FRANK

If you don't stop botherin' me, I'll get the belt! Now leave us alone.

[Hurt, confused....MIKE slowly drifts off. Everyone else becomes tense.]

What'll it be Whimpy?

ANDY:

Two.

FRANK:

Bluffin' again.

DOLORES:

One for me.

FRANK:

Whoa! Gonna shoot the Moon! I'm going for it too....Dealer stays pat. It's gonna cost you an Eagle to stay!

DOLORES:

Stakes too rich for me.....Fold.

[JANEY ENTERS]

JANEY:

Frank, do you know where Mike's check is?

FRANK:

We're playing poker, hon.

JAMES:

I'm out.

JANEY:

Is this his check?

ANDY:

I fold.

JANEY: [to others]

I'm sorry to barge in, but I think Frank and I have to talk.

DOLORES:

I'll go put the sandwiches in the oven...You boys want to help?

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ANDY & JAMES: [eagerly]

You bet!

[ANDY, JAMES, DOLORES EXIT]

FRANK:

Are you going to ruin this game too?

JANEY:

How could you?!

FRANK:

For a lousy 100 bucks!

JANEY:

Lousy to a man who throws 50 dollars away on a resume....This check is like his first blue ribbon.

FRANK:

What are you driving at?

JANEY:

He's not ever going to have a lot of things you've had. I put that check by your bed to remind you of a special person in your life.... We promised never to spendc any of his money....So he can move out someday and live on his own.

FRANK:

Listen to what you're saying Janey! You know that's he's never going to move out on his own.

JANEY:

His supervisor called last week to congratulate us on Mike's progress. He's made production before anyone else at Millside. They think he has a real chance for a community job.

FRANK:

Nobody ever leaves those places.

JANEY:

You sure have a lot of "never, nevers" in your vocabulary...Maybe that makes it all the more important to save for his future.

FRANK:

What about my future?!
I was gonna retire in 10 years....maybe even have my own business.
Now I'll have to work till I drop. There's no point in trying to save anymore.
You think Mikes gonna support us in old age like other sons do?
So why don't we enjoy some of it now....while we still can....
All I got left is a half painted business sign....And if you listen real close, you'll hear the termites waiting for me to close up shop!

JANEY:

And when we go, who's to look after Mike? That's what it's all about. That's why I volunteered our family for that new living will project.

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FRANK:

Don't badger me with that!

JANEY:

Last week you ranted and raved because people treated you differently.

[Mimicking FRANK talking]

"When you're unemployed everybody feels sorry for you....makes me feel like less than a man".....Remember?

[silent pause as FRANK sit]

Mike's been treated different his whole life.....
How does it feel to walk around in Mike's shoes for awhile?
Pretty tight fit, isn't it?

[ENTERS MIKE, WIPING HIS EYES]

MIKE:

You can have that dumb check....I don't want it anymore....And I don't want to work in that crummy shop no more!

FRANK:

Hey, come on, Mike....

JANEY:

Mike, I got some cake left over.

MIKE:

I'm not hungry Mom.

JANEY:

Not even for a piece of Mint Dazzler? I can have it defrosted in 10 minutes.
You come and help me....

[JANEY AND MIKE EXIT... JACK, THE NARRATOR ENTERS WITH A NEWSPAPER AND HANDS IT TO FRANK]

FRANK:

Frank Bolles ain't worth the ink on this check, or the spit on his shoes....
You're over the hill and you ain't never been to the top.....

[PICKING UP WANT ADS AND READING:]

"Immediate opening: No skills required except the love of adventure...."

[FRANK scans the ad and then hands the paper to JACK. FRANK then exits]

JACK:[continues reading the ad]

"... love of adventure...Travel is involved. Must be over 18 and willing to take risks. Send confidential reply to: 'Soldier of Fortune Inc'; POB 445. Orphans preferred"....

[Goes over to the saw and helps set it up. Then looking at the audience:]

ACT II, SCENE 5: STICKS AND STONES/ BREAKING BONES.

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SCENE 5: STICKS AND STONES/BREAKING BONES

SETTING: FRANK IS SITTING IN FRONT OF GRANDPA'S TABLE SAW. HE IS NOW UNSHAVEN, UNKEPT AND IN HIS BATHROBE. HE SITS THERE SIPPING A BEER. IT IS EARLY MORNING. HE HAS AN INSURANCE POLICY IN HIS ROBE POCKET.

JANEY ENTERS, DRESSED FOR WORK AND IN A HURRY. SHE HAS BROUGHT HIM A CUP OF COFFEE.

JANE:
You've got to get dressed someday Frank.

FRANK: [mimicking her]
"Got to get dressed someday".....for what?!

JANE:
I brought you some coffee.

FRANK:
I got eyes....Coffee is for housewives....Househusbands drink beer.

JANE:
I've got to stop at the post office, so I'll take the bus....If you have time would you drive Mike up to Millside this morning.....

[FRANK does not respond]

And could you pick of these at the store?

[She starts to kiss him then pauses to consider]

FRANK:
Sure, sure....I got plenty of time....Hurry...don't be late to work.

JANE:
[Quickly, dutifully, kisses his rough face]
Shave before you go out.....

FRANK: [mockingly]
What will the neighbors think...

JANE:
I'm late...We can fight about it later.

[JANEY EXITS]

FRANK:
Plenty of time for fightin' too.

FRANK GETS UP AND SLOWLY REMOVES THE TARP FROM THE OLD TABLE SAW. HE PICKS UP THE OLD "F AND M" SIGN....STUDIES IT AND THEN DROPS IT. NEXT HE TAKES OUT HIS INSURANCE POLICY AND LAYS IT ON THE TABLE...

STARING AT IT...THEN SIPPING SLOWLY ON HIS BEER....HE IS GRAPPLING WITH A DECISION, THERE ARE A FEW QUIET MOMENTS AS HE PONDERS WHAT TO DO. HE STRUGGLES WITH THIS IN THE ENSUING MOMENT, TURNING ON AND OFF THE MACHINE AS IF TRYING TO MAKE A FINAL DECISION

FRANK:

Talk to me ol' buzz saw...Tell me what to do...
Somebody's got to talk to me....

I know I haven't sharpened you in a long time,
Your teeth are full of sap.

I'm all ears and wide open!

...All those ribbons we won.
I haven't forgot.
Oh sure...they shellacked me with praise,
Up one side and down the other..
Sure...sure

I was gonna be more than a green chain donkey!
I wanted to callous these hands with craftsmanship.

What do I got now?
Empty hands.....

Talk to me
you cold piece of steel?!

What's there left that's mine?

[PICKS UP A PIECE OF WOOD.
STARTS THE SAW AND PUSHES IT THROUGH.]

I can't hear you talk no more...
That scares the crap out of me!

[EXAMINING SAW CUT]

Not even a decent cut.

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FRANK:

[PLACES HIS ARM ON THE TABLE SAW LIKE IT WAS A PIECE OF WOOD. THEN SIPS HIS BEER. FINALLY TAKES INSURANCE POLICY FROM HIS POCKET AND READS:]

"Non-disabling injury benefit...accidental death or dismemberment"
"Is payable only for the loss that occurs within 90 days of accident....Intentional injuries not covered"
Hell, shop accidents happen all the time.

[TURNS ON THE SAW. PLACES BOTH ARMS IN FRONT OF THE SAW...HESITATINGLY, ALTERNATELY. AGAIN, PLACES HIS ARM AS THOUGH IT WERE A PIECE OF WOOD ABOUT TO BE CROSS-CUT. THEN STOPS AND CONTINUES READING OVER THE NOISE OF THE SAW.]

"Thereafter benefits will be payable during the further continuance of any such disability"

Let's see.....hmmmm.....
"Both hands by severance at or above the wrist joints...Principal sum"
It would be hard to explain *both* hands.
"One hand and one foot...."

[PUTS HIS FOOT UP ON THE SAW]

That's RIDICULOUS!

[ANGRY...HE LOOKS AROUND. HIS EYES AND HANDS FALL UPON THE F AND M SIGN.

HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH, TIGHTENS HIS JAW, AND THEN PUSHES THE SIGN THROUGH THE SAW. TURNING OFF THE SAW AS THOUGH EXHAUSTED....HE SLUMPS DOWN BESIDE THE SAW....BLOWING HIS NOSE AND WIPING HIS EYES...

THEN HE TAKES OUT HIS WALLET AND FISHES FOR MIKE'S PAYCHECK. HE IS WIPING HIS EYES AND STARING AT THE CHECK WHEN MIKE COMES IN.]

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MIKE:

I'm gonna be late....

[Goes over to his father and slowly realizes that his father is upset]

We gotta warm up the car...What's wrong Dad?

[MIKE see the broken sign and picks up a piece]

MIKE:

Did you hurt yourself? Do you want a beer?

FRANK:

I don't know what I want.....I do know one thing....

[Hands MIKE the check]

This isn't mine.

MIKE:

My paycheck.

FRANK:

It may not be a large check, but it's too big for my wallet....I ain't proud of much these past months, but at least I never spent it...

MIKE:

Me either.

[Takes the check and puts it in his wallet]

FRANK:

Big spender, eh.

MIKE: [Handing FRANK a card]

I forgot to give you this...You're supposed to call Mrs. Kildow.

FRANK:

Ain't she your supervisor at Millside?

MIKE:

It's real important.

FRANK:

You better not be in trouble?

MIKE:

No...no.

FRANK: [handing MIKE the keys]

Here sport, go warm up the car while I call her...

MIKE:

By myself?

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FRANK:
You've got to stop dependin' on me! Make sure it's in Park.

MIKE:
Park...

FRANK: [starts over to a phone]
The letter "P".

MIKE: [exiting...FRANK dials]
"P".

FRANK:
Hello...I'm supposed to talk to Mrs. Kildow.
Sure...This is Frank Bolles...Yes...Mike's father.
He said I was supposed to call---oh...yes...
That's true...I did teach him how to make those frames....
Yeah I'm proud of him...Oh sure...Safety first....

[PAINFUL PAUSE]

Oh no...not anymore...no...Mike gets carried away...There is no F and M Woodcrafts...

Yes...yes....I won a few ribbons...He said that?...uh-huh...yes...Retired?

[PAUSES...then becomes gradually excited]

What does a shop foreman do?
Sure, if I can teach Mike why not!
Oh no, I don't have to think about it...Thursday would be fine...
I understand...Sure you have to advertise it first...
Nine on Thursday would be great!

[Hangs up phone...semi-stunned]

I haven't had an interview in months....
And my son comes up with a job lead!
And in a woodshop!

[Takes out policy and stares at it]

"Either hand by severance"
No wonder that old buzz saw wouldn't talk to me...

[MIKE enters]

MIKE:
She's warmed up good.

FRANK:
Looks like I'm going to be visiting Mrs. Kildow at Millside....

MIKE:
We can have F and M--

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FRANK:

Hold on Woodhead--it's still just an interview.

MIKE:

I like Mrs. Kildow.

FRANK:

She sounds decent....
I've got to get my coat to the cleaners...shave...

MIKE:

I'll get your luck tie and hat.

[Rummages through a drawer]

FRANK:

Too bad luck counts more than these....

[Holding up his hands]

But I guess it's time we celebrate my new luck....With a visit to the grocery store

MIKE:

Twinkies?!

FRANK:

Oh sure...Janey would love to have twinkies....

MIKE:

I'll buy the twinkies...

FRANK:

Big spender!

MIKE:

Let me....I get a new check on Friday!

[MIKE pulls back and thinks]

Then will I have enough for poker?

FRANK:

You've got plenty!

MIKE:

Can we play cards tonight?

FRANK:

You bet.

MIKE:

With Eagles and chips....?

FRANK:

And beer.....With a Quarter Ante!

THE END

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